the tower

Alabama College

Montevallo, Alabama

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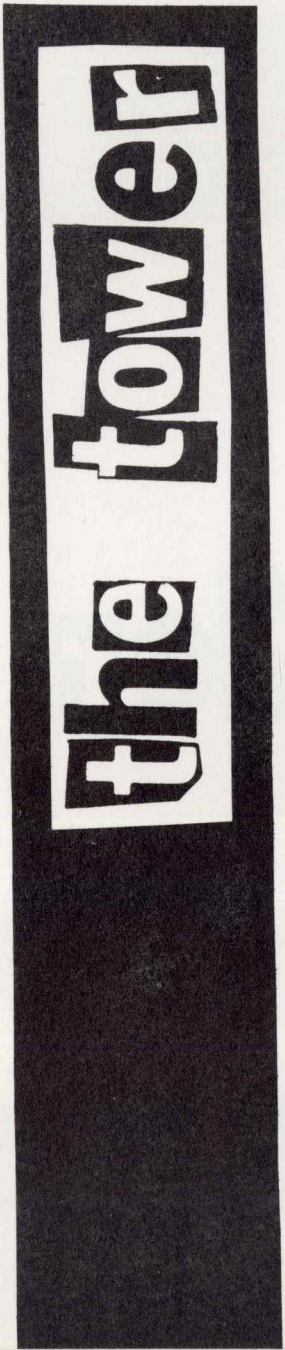

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The Secret Of The Flower

AN INVESTIGATION OF ZEN

by

Charles Howard Thomas

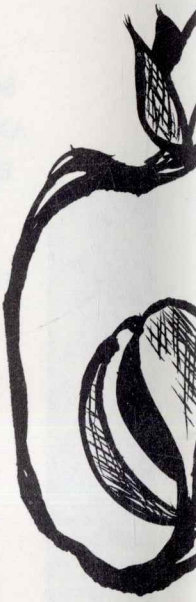
"Praise Allah," shrieks the muezzin from a prayer tower to hundreds of Moslems bowed in Arabia.

In Europe is heard a priest muttering, *"Gloria in Excelsis Deo . . . . . "*

In America, sweating Negroes sway and shout, "Great God come save this sinner!"

In Japan, a small group of yellow-robed monks, slightly tipsy from tea and *saki,* softly sing melancholy verses to the moon. These are Zen.

What is Zen, this religion that calls on no god, utters no prayer and shouts to no savior?



Gautama Buddha, the Enlightened One, was born about 560 B.C. in northern India and died about 480 B.C.[1] He preached no religion, made no promises of Paradise and yet became a redeemer. In his later years people came to him to ask, "What are you?" How many people have provoked this question: not "Who are you?" with respect to name, origin, or ancestry, but *"What* are you?—what order of being do you belong to, what species do you represent?" Not Ceasar, not Napoleon, nor even Socrates. Only two men—Jesus and Buddha. When the people carried their puzzlement to the Buddha, the answer he gave provided his entire message.

"Are you a God?" they asked. "No." "An angel?" "No." "A saint?" "No." "Then what are you?"

"I am awake."[2] His awakening did not come with his birth, however, and his search for enlightenment was not easy. Buddha spent many years as a wanderer in the forest and as an ascetic monk.[3] Gautama turned his back on mortification and devoted his energies to a combination of rigorous thought and mystic concentration along the lines of *raja yoga.*[4] One night Buddha sat under the now famous Bodhi tree (Bodhi meaning enlightenment) for many hours, and despite great temptations by the Evil One, meditated deeply. The Evil One left, and while the Bodhi tree rained red blossoms,

1. A. F. Herold, THE LIFE OF BUDDHA ACCORDING TO THE LEGENDS OF ANCIENT INDIA (New York, 1927), p. 236.

2. Fredrick H. Smith, THE BUDDHIST WAY OF LIFE, ITS PHILOSOPHY AND HISTORY (New York, 1951), p. 141.

3. D T. Suzuki, ZEN BUDDHISM, ed. William Barrett (New York, 1958), p. 16.

4. Ibid.

Gautama's meditation deepened, until, as the morning star glittered in the transparent eastern sky, his mind pierced the bubble of the universe, shattered it, and restored it with the effulgence of true being. The Great Awakening had come, and "all created things filled the morning air with their rejoicings and the earth quaked six ways with wonder. Ten thousand galaxies shuddered in awe as lotuses bloomed in every tree, turning the entire universe into a bouquet of flowers sent whirling through the air."[5]

Thereafter, Buddha preached a way of life devoid of authority, ritual and speculation. "One thing I teach," said Buddha: "suffering and the end of suffering . . . It is just Ill and the ceasing of Ill that I proclaim."[6] Yet he was understood by a few keen intellects to have a message on a higher plane.

The most outstanding example of this higher plane was the "Flower Sermon." Gathering his disciples around him Buddha stood on a mountain as if preparing to deliver a sermon; instead, he held aloft a golden lotus blossom and said nothing. No one understood the meaning of this gesture except the aged monk, Mahakayaspa, who merely smiled, by which sign Buddha realized that the monk had been truly enlightened.[7] This secretive smile was to be on the faces of a few devout men in India, then China and finally Japan, where this transcendental cognizance by intuitive grasp is known as Zen. As Zen claims to have been directly inspired by Buddha, through Mahakayaspa, it is unfortunate that there are no historical records concerning his special transmission of Zen.[8]

The history of Zen dates with the Coming of Bodhi Dharma into China in 520 A.D.[9] His message is best summed up these lines:

A special transmission outside
the scriptures;
No dependence upon words or letters;
Direct pointing at the soul of man;
Seeing into one's nature and the
attainment of Buddhahood.[10]

His travels in China won many to Buddhism, but more important, he established an order of monks who were later to be called Ch'an, or in Japan, Zen. When he died at the age of over a hundred, his new order remained intact as a result of the understanding of the Great Truth by one Hui-k'e, to whom Bodhi Dharma had said, "You have my marrow."[11] The most outstanding founder of Chinese Zen was Hui-neng, who was an unlearned rustic, but who, through humility

5. "Selections from the Pali Sources," A BUDDHIST BIBLE, ed. Dwight Goddard, (Therfort, Vermont, 1938), p. 37.
6. D. T. Suzuki, op. cit., p. 204.
7. Ibid., p. 27.
8. J. B. Pratt, op. cit., p. 301.
9. Kenneth S. Saunders, EPOCHS IN BUDDHIST HISTORY (New York, 1924), p. 211.
10. D. T. Suzuki, op. cit., p. 157.
11. Ibid.

and perserverance was able to wear the robe of the Patriarch.[12] Employed as a menial laborer in the monastary at Yellow Plum Mountain, under the supervision of Hung-jen, the Fifth Patriarch, he so impressed his master with his true understanding of the Buddha-Nature that he was given the position of Sixth Patriarch. While he never moved far from his home province, we can say that Zen came into its own consciousness during the Patriarchy of Hui-neng. While Bodhi Dharma brought Zen from India and successfully transplanted it in China, Zen did not recognize its special message at the time. More than two centuries were needed before it knew how to express itself in the way native to the Chinese mind. As soon as this transformation or transplantation was accomplished by Hui-neng, his disciples proceeded at once to work out all its implications. Thus Zen was born.

In 1191, a devout Buddist from Japan, by the name of Eisai, returned from China where he had studied the doctrines of the Ch'an school. By 1202 he had established a school at Kyoto which, though it had met with opposition in the Brotherhood, was protected by the royal family, who became ardent adherents to Zen.[13] To this day, Zen has a great influence on the Japanese people, "the guiding force behind the way of the Samurai, the *hari-kari,* and the Kamikaze."[14] It is surprising that, after traveling thousands of miles and twenty five hundred years, Zen has the same quality that answered the riddle of the Flower Sermon: that intuitive flash, the *satori.*

The satori is inextricable in an explanation of Zen, and it is not only mentioned but also elaborated in every text on the subject. The satori, which is searched for by every monk (and by every human, according to Zen believers) must be reached only after a most highly accentuated state of concentration. It is reported countless times that a monk, after deep meditation and concentrated effort, is plunged into satori by the sound of a temple bell, the reading of a stanza, or more often, by the sharp sting of his master s *koshu,* a rod or stick kept for exactly that purpose. This flash of intuitive understanding has eight major characteristics, according to D. T. Suzuki, which may help to explain its nature.[15]

1. *Irrationality.* Satori is not a conclusion to be reached by reasoning, and it defies all intellectual determination. Those who experience satori are always at a loss to explain it logically and coherently, and if explanation is attempted, the content of the satori usually undergoes a mutilation. There is nothing about the satori that is suggestive of cool reasoning or quiet metaphysical analysis, but of a certain desperate will to break through the barriers of the unknown, impelled by some irrational or unconscious power. Therefore the outcome also defies intellection or conceptualization. In fact, we are warned against this by the Zen masters, for all words, explanations, books and the like

12. The Patriarchy in China was passed on from one monastic leader to the most able and advanced student, after the fashion of Buddha to Mahakayaspa.

13. J. B. Pratt, op. cit., p. 485.

14. Peter Hyun, "Beat Zen, Square Zen," ENCOUNTER, XIII (July, 1959), p. 57.

15. The great bulk of factual material in the next eight points was gleaned from D. T. Suzuki, ZEN BUDDHISM, pp. 100-148.

are but fingers pointing to the moon, and it is far too easy for man to concertrate on the finger and not on the moon.

2. *Intuitive Insight.* The satori has a noetic quality such as is described by William James in his *Vareties of Religious Experience.* Without this noetic quality satori would lose all its pungency, for it is the reason for satori itsef. While inexplicable, satori is Zen's counterpart of the mystical experience which, whenever it appears, in Zen, or any other religion, brings joy; a feeling of oneness with all things and a heightened sense of reality which cannot be translated into the language of the everyday world. But whereas most religions regard such experiences as at least the earthly phase of Man's religious quest, for Zen it is only a point of departure.

3. *Authoritativeness.* Being direct and personal, it is sufficient unto itself, and the knowledge realized by it is final and irrefutable by logical argument. Logic can merely explain it, or interpret it in connection with other kinds of knowledge with which our minds are filled. A form of inner perception, satori, taking place in the most interior parts of the unconscious, is final and has a sense of authoritativeness, which, being the last term of experience, cannot be denied by outsiders who have had no such experience.

4. *Affirmation.* That which is authoritative and final can never be negative, for negation has no value in life; it is not a power that urges, nor does it give one a place to rest. Although satori has been expressed in negative terms, it is essentially an affirmative attitude towards existence, accepting things as they are, regardless of their moral value. This acceptance takes place so that things are acknowledged in their suprarelative or transcendental aspect where no dualism of any sort prevails. "Zen is a Suchness—a grand affirmation."[16]

5. *Sense of the Beyond.* This is rather difficult to describe, for those who have never had a satori can never know the experience, whereby the personality explodes within its shell and the "I" melts into the nothing that is everything. As far as the psychology of the satori is considered, a sense of the Beyond is all that can be said; to call it the Beyond, the Absolute, God or Person is to go further than the experience itself and plunge into theology or metaphysics.

6. *Impersonal Tone.* The satori seems barren and prosaic compared to Christian mystical experiences, and Zen uses no such words with personal (and frequently sexual) connotations as flame of love, embrace, the beloved, bride of God, spiritual matrimony, Father, Son, God, *et cetera.* Not only is satori a non-glorious and unromantic event, but the occasion that inspires it is most often an unextraordinary phenomenon such as a slap, or a loud noise. There is no romance of love-making, no voice of the Holy Ghost, no plenitude of Divine Grace, no glorification of any sort. Here is nothing painted in high colors; all is grey and extremely unobtrusive and unattractive.

7. *Feeling of Exaltation.* That this feeling inevitably accompanies

16. Huston Smith, THE RELIGIONS OF MAN (New York, 1958), p. 117.

satori results from the breaking up of restrictions imposed on each individual being, not as a mere negative incident, but quite a positive one, one in which one is freed from the usual restrictions of consciousness. Satori essentially consists in doing away with the oppositions that make heavy our consciousness by going beyond those oppositions. To be released from those forces that crowd and burden the mind must of necessity make one feel immensely and intensely relieved and exalted.

> More than any earthly power,
> More than all the joys of heaven,
> More than rule o'er all the world,
> Is the entrance to the Stream.[17]

8. *Momentariness.* Satori comes upon one abruptly and is a momentary experience. In fact, if it is no abrupt and momentary, it is not a satori. Satori opens up in one moment an altogether new vista, and the whole existence is appraised from quite a new angle of observation.

These eight points, of course, no more describe or explain satori than words, those fingers pointing at the moon, can explain the true nature of anything. Zen will point its finger, but only to withdraw it at once, lest observers attend to the finger instead of the moon. There are three key "fingers" that direct the attention of the aspirant toward Enlightenment. They are *zanzen, koan* and *sanzen.*

Zazen means literally, "seated Meditation."[18] The bulk of Zen training takes place in a large meditation hall. Visitors to these halls will be struck by the seemingly endless hours the monks devote to sitting quietly on two long, raised platforms on either side. Sitting in the classic *yoga* posture, their eyes are half open, their gaze falls unfocused on the floor a few feet from them. So they sit hour after hour, day after day, year after year,[19] seeking first to develop their intuitive powers (thought to center physiologically in the abdomen),[20] and later to relate their intuitive discoveries to the immediacy of their lives.[21] We must not infer from this that Zen is opposed to words and reason entirely. It is, to be sure, no more impressed with the mind's attempt to mirror ultimate reality than was Kierkgaard with Hegel's Metaphysics. The finaglings of reason can no more bring the mind to the point where it can reproduce reality than a brick, however polished, can reflect the sun. By this I do not mean that reason has no value, for obviously it can help us to make our way in this physical and social world, a fact which leads Zen, in the main, to be staunch advocates of education. Moreover, working in special ways, reason can actually help awareness toward its goal. If the way

17. "Pali Sources," A BUDDHIST BIBLE, p. 37.

18. D. T. Suzuki, op. cit., p. 228.

19. In fact a classic example is that of Wu-wung, who sat with his back to a wall, not moving for thirty years.

20. Huston Smith, op. cit., p. 124.

21. Richard Rumbold, "Catching the Mood of the Universe," ENCOUNTER, XIII (Jan., 1959), p. 23.

it is employed to do this seems somewhat like the way poison is used in small amounts as antidote for disease, we may add that reason can also play an important role as an interpreter, serving as a bridge to join the newly discovered world (satori) to the commonsense world to which the mind is accustomed. For there is not a Zen problem, whose answer, once discovered, does not make good sense within its own framework of reference, not an experience which the masters are not unwilling to try to describe or explain, once given the proper set of circumstances. The point regarding Zen's relation to reason is simply a double one: first Zen logic and description make sense only from an experimental perspective radically different from the ordinary; and second, Zen masters are determined that their students attain the experience itself, and not allow talk to take its place. Nowhere is Zen's determination on this latter point more evidenced than in the method adopted for its own perpetuation. Whereas other religions have answered the difficult problem of historical continuity by institutional organization, papal succession, or resort to authority in fixed creed or scripture, Zen has rested its survival on a special state of awareness passed directly from mind to mind, like flame passed from candle to candle. The most intriguing element in the process, however, is the use made of one of the strangest devices for spiritual training to be encountered anywhere in the religions of man—the *koan*.

In a general way koan means Problem,[22] but from man's normal perspective the problems the koans pose seem fantastic. At first they seem like nothing so much as a cross between a shaggy dog story and a riddle. The koan that is usually given the novice is this one:

> All things are reducible to the One. To what is the One reducible?
> A robe that weighs seven *chin*.

There are others that are found time and time again in the study of Zen.

> What was the appearance of you face before your ancestors were born?

> A cow passes by a window. Its head, horns, and the four legs pass by.
> Why does not the tail pass by?

> We are familiar with the sound of two hands clapping. What is the sound of one hand clapping? (If you protest that one hand cannot clap, you have not even begun to see the light.)

> What is the meaning of Buddha's coming? The cyprus in the courtyard.

Our first impulse is to dismiss these puzzles as absurd, but this is precisely what the Zen trainee is not allowed to do. He is commanded to bring the full impact of his mind upon the problems, sometimes plunging them into the mind's deep intuitive well, until he comes up with an answer acceptable to his master, a task that, on a single koan, may take as long as writing a doctoral dissertation. During this time

22. D. T. Suzuki, op. cit., p. 119.

the mind is intensely aware, and constantly at work, but working in a special way. We in the West rely on reason so fully that we must remind ourselves that in Zen we are dealing with a perspective that is convinced above all else that reason is inherently limited and in the end must yeild to, or at least be supplemented by, another mode of knowing that can grasp reality far more accurately. For Zen, if reason is not a ball and chain anchoring the mind to earth, it is at least a ladder too short to reach the full height of truth. It must, therefore, be transcended, and it is just this transcendence that koans are designed to assist. If they appear to contain ingredients that are a scandal to reason, we must remember that Zen is not trying to make peace with man's cooped-up, ordinary perspective. Its first job is just the opposite: by agitation to stir the mind to impatience; to loosen the mind to discontent with the conventional canons of reason in which the mind has been locked up to that point. By forcing reason to wrestle with what, from the normal point of view, is flat absurdity, by compelling it to conjoin incompatibles, Zen tries to reduce it to the frantic condition of a cornered rat. By paradox, and puzzle it will provoke, excite, baffle and exhaust the mind until it sees that thinking is never more than thinking about or feeling never more than feeling about. Then, having brought the subject into an intellectual and emotional impasse, it counts on a flash of sudden insight to bridge the gap between second-and firsthand experience. The koan's contradiction increases the pressure in the trainee's mind until the structure of ordinary reason collapses completely, clearing the way for sudden intuition; and then:

> Undisturbed and serene, the wise man practices no virtue;
> Self possessed and dispassionate, he commits no sin;
> Calm and silent, he gives up seeing and hearing;
> Even and upright, his mind abides nowhere.[23]

As he struggles with his koan, the Zen monk is alone, yet not alone. Books will not help him, and he does not discuss his koan with his fellow monks. But he does confront his master in a private conference known as a *sanzen,*[24] which means conference. The master will answer questions, validate satoris and reject false ones. This period may also be used for disciplining and punishment.

Zen, which is the purest form of Buddhism, is a fresh breeze in this world of stale ideas and concepts. It is a new bank of the river of Life, and from this shore we may understand the profoundness in the Renunciation of Buddha, who resolved to forego entering the untroubled pool of Eternity until the "grass itself be enlightened,"[25] meaning, since grass forever grows, until the end of time. This does not mean that we may never find total fulfillment; it means instead that we may rise to the point where the distinction between time and eternity is no longer there, and lightning and thunder insight tran-

23. Kenneth S. Sounders, op. cit., p. 230.

24. Hyun, op. cit., p. 20.

25. Fredrick H. Smith, op. cit., p. 149.

scends into the Stream. We only have to raise our eyes, open our ears and shut our mouths.

Genshu said, "Do you hear the murmuring of the stream? There is the way to enter."[26] And to what does Zen training lead? A Western student of Zen, who had been trained in Kyoto for seven years, said, "You wake up in the morning, and the world seems so beautiful that you can hardly stand it."[27] But as the Zen would tell you,

> I have spoken in vain; for what can words tell of things with no yesterday, tomorrow or today?[28]

A muezzin cries in Arabia, a priest mutters in Europe, a Negro shouts in America.

And in Japan, a group of yellow-robed monks, slightly tipsy from tea and *saki,* softly sing melancholy verses to the moon. This, then, is Zen.

26. D. T. Suzuki, op. cit., p. 188.

27. Huston Smith, op. cit., p. 120.

28. J. B. Pratt, op. cit., p. 485.

GENESIS

Somewhere at the limits of
Conjecture (having acknowledged each other)
We meet

and our encounter
Is the whole, unbroken egg
Deliberate and functional in which

Something shared exceeding
The static, isolated concept spans
Concentrically to growth.

All our angular
Loneness merges into
A smooth unbroken
Curvature of contact,

The simple synthesis
Elipsically engendering
Life.

—Angeline Waites

Conversations With a Mystagogue

by Per Sonne

I

DEMOS: (smacking his Dentyne, smoothing down his D. A.) Hi ya, kid, how's tricks?

ARISTOS: (lighting up his Viceroy) We are not living in the best of all possible worlds.

DEMOS: Whatsa matter, Jack, sump'n eatin' ya?

ARISTOS: You might put it that way. I feel alone and palely loitering.

DEMOS: Cut that jazz or let me dig you. If you don't like it around here, go line yourself up with some other squares.

ARISTOS: That is precisely one of my difficulties. There is no place else to go—in Alabama, anyway. Here we are in an idyllic retreat: we may not have an Ivory Tower, but we have a Tower; and under the pressure of the times, should I be a gloomy prophet to foretell a day when the Tower itself will be dismantled before our very eyes?

DEMOS: Aw, get off it. The Tower'll be here as long as Alabama has cotton.

ARISTOS: (taking a French inhale) And what makes you so sure? Do you not see an alarming victory for the forces of Progress and Efficiency? Does the Tower serve any functional purpose? Are we not building bigger and better parking lots?

DEMOS: So what! We gotta have cars, ain't we? You expect us to walk all the way from Napier to Comer? Man, you're out of it. You shoulda sung that song several months back if you was going to do any gripin'.

ARISTOS: You are quite right. It is my malignant star that makes me inevitably out of touch with the times. It does seem to me that a much simpler answer to the problem would have been to require students to walk to class. But let that pass—right now I think we should make an effort to preserve as much of the ambience and beauty of the place as possible.

DEMOS: Ambi-who? Come again, Mack?

ARISTOS: Ambience—it is a rather affected French word for atmosphere. You see, a college is made up of so many intangibles. All *good* colleges have a kind of air, a mystical blend of traditions, the past, peculiar differences, and landscapes; parking signs and parking lots, at any rate, do nothing to contribute to atmosphere.

DEMOS: Well whaddya know—we got an atmosphere! (Removing Dentyne to light a Lucky) What kind of atmosphere have we got?

ARISTOS: Well, we have a Southern atmosphere: which in itself is not unique, but is quite agreeable. There is a certain grace and graciousness inherent in the tradition of the college. It is made up of long greenswards, pecan groves, heavy old oaks, brick walks. I maintain that to destroy the visual beauty of the college is to do violence to the mystique of the institution.

DEMOS: You might be from Way Out, but I think you got something there. Tell me more.

ARISTOS: I am flattered by your encouragement. The tradition is also one of leisureliness and gentility. (Perhaps in the South the concept of the lady and the gentleman is not quite as extinct as it is in other parts of America.) This tradition is again made up of intangibles—let's say, homemade bread, homemade ice cream, and fresh mayonnaise. Most essential to the preservation of the atmosphere is dining at tables, with service and clean linen with every meal.

DEMOS: But the dining hall's gotta go, man. We can't have a bigger college and still keep up this gentleman bit.

ARISTOS: Alas, another triumph for Mammon. To be sure, it is more efficient and more economical to have a cafeteria. But isn't the way we eat our food of as much importance as the food we eat?

DEMOS: So you think we can afford to be beautiful?

ARISTOS: Do you think we can afford to be ugly? We'll both agree that man is a product of his surroundings. If clothes make the man, don't the houses and the environment also influence him?

DEMOS: (ruffling his Tony Curtis) Well . . .

ARISTOS: Presumably even you would agree that the ideal of the gentleman might yet be inculcated. And it can be done. For one thing, keep the dining hall as a dining hall; stop further destruction of the landscape; encourage the wearing of coats and ties for the evening meal.

DEMOS: (visibly agitated) COATS AND TIES?!!!

ARISTOS: (rather humbly) We're not so bursting with manly vigor that we can't keep them on for a half hour once a day. And in line with this, the girls look a lot better in dresses. 'Zounds, man, may they never wear Bermudas to class!

DEMOS: Well, I'm with you there. But you still haven't zeroed in on

the problem. If this college is going to grow, you can't—any way you look at it—keep up frills like a dining hall and a beautiful campus.

ARISTOS: (smiling mysteriously) Here the solution is quite simple. Keep the college its present size. Are colleges in education for business? Are *qualitative* standards not of first importance? Aren't five well-educated people more important than twenty-five semi-literates? Take 1000 for a good round number—we can meet that; with more, I fear some cultural disaster. Essentially we should concentrate on this: building a better college rather than a bigger one. If more people want to come, that's to the good—we can then be more selective about whom we admit, thereby raising the standards quite appreciably.

DEMOS: But this is a state college; my old man pays state taxes; if he's got a boy who wants to come here, it's the duty of the college to give him education.

ARISTOS: (suppressing a yawn) When Brains are distributed democratically, then it will be the duty of the state to give everybody an equal education. But I quite agree with you that as a state college we have a primary duty to serve the state. This we can do best by producing well-rounded and well-educated citizens. Alabama College is in many ways uniquely fortunate. We have a resourceful and farsighted administration, a reasonably good faculty. No other college in Alabama has as much potential as we have: for us to ignore our advantages of atmosphere, heritage, tradition, would be tragic, for then we would be like any other state callege. A select group of well-read, high principled college graduates would probably be the greatest gift God or the Legislature could give Alabama. So you see, I have no other place to go; and that is why I question what is being done in the name of Progress. And now if you'll excuse me, I must be off.
DEMOS: Where ya' goin', man?

ARISTOS: I'm going to pad out in the Tower, from which lonely eminence I'll watch the parking violations and contemplate the divine mysteries of Plato.

II

(DEMOS is climbing up the fire escape on the Tower. At the top, he stops, combs his hair, and calls out . . .)

DEMOS: Hey, egghead! You still up here?

ARISTOS: Confound it, man! You have interrupted my morning exercises. Ordinarily I levitate, but today I was just trying to get a Union—I'm afraid without much success, for even up here the exhaust fumes cloud my visions. Would you like to sit at my feet?

DEMOS: Sit at your feet like fun. I'll take a pad. Got some juice?

ARISTOS: If you are referring to the celestial liquor of the gods, you know that it is prohibited in this county, and the Men's House Council has already been up here twice. I'll be glad to mix you a glass of Instant Coca-Cola, however. Now, what's on your mind?

DEMOS: Well, it's like you were saying the other day—that this college might be doin' the state some good to try to educate a few sharp guys instead of taking every moron who's got a high school diploma. I think I dig it, man, but just what do you think this place can and oughta do?

ARISTOS: Well undoubtedly the college is in a state of transition, so it's difficult to say, particularly as none of us students know what will happen until it's happened. It seems to me we must start with policy—do you know what kind of college this is?

DEMOS: Sure, it's a liberal arts college—any square who can read letterheads knows that.

ARISTOS: And what is a liberal arts college?

DEMOS: Well, it's like this—a liberal arts college gives you a better education than a technical college or a teacher's college.

ARISTOS: Tell me then: what courses can you take in a liberal arts college?

DEMOS: Well, you can take Home Economics, Physical Education, Radio and Television, Techniques in Social Recreation, Nutrition and Dietetics, Basic Engineering, Business Administration . . . . .

ARISTOS: In the name of Zen, enough! Undoubtedly each of these courses is valuable in the service of society, but the question is: how valuable are they here? The aim of a liberal arts education is to produce the gentleman (or lady), who is familiar with the most important ideas in Western history and the basic values of the Graeco-Judaic-Christian tradition.

DEMOS: That's a mouthful, but tell me more about this values-bit.

ARISTOS: Values order our lives. If we think sex is primary, we shall devote our lives to the pursuit of the skirt; if it's alcohol, to the bottle; it it's money, to the amassing and accumulation thereof. In the liberal arts we feel that it is a knowledge of the best that has been thought and said in the past; and that somehow all these values are oriented around humanity, specifically around the intrinsic worth and dignity of the individual.

DEMOS: Why don't you start with society? You gotta admit that the problems facing man now are social, not personal—say, that sounds pretty good, doesn't it?—like I was saying, problems like communism, overpopulation, adjusting to the Space Age, feeding all those hungry millions we're always hearing about in Sociology. And the segregation bit too.

ARISTOS: To be sure, those are realities with which we must contend. That they are ultimate problems I deny. Pardon me while I light my hookah . . . as I was saying . . . we must start with the individual, the self. The *cost* of self-knowledge—how difficult to divest prejudices, shatter illusions. But we must know our limitations, our abilities, our desires, our capacities to suffer before we can attain any kind of truth.

And before you begin speculation on Reality you have to know the reality of self; and although our attempts at self-knowledge will always be doomed to frustration, we'll learn something in the process.

DEMOS: O.K., Dad, but just how do you think L. A. is going to give you your Self-knowledge?

ARISTOS: Although people are conditioned by environment, they don't really change. The same problem of self-knowledge faced Socrates as surely as it faces the inquiring college student. A liberal arts college, then, should have a strong philosophy department, for philosophy is nothing but man's records of his attempts to learn of himself. A liberal arts college should surely have a program in the classical languages, which is the medium used in the past for the transmission of his attempt to learn. And a liberal arts college should certainly provide some courses in religion, which is the record of man's quest for God; and some courses in ethics, which describe man's changing relationship with his fellow man.

DEMOS: Don't we do any of this here?

ARISTOS: Not really. There's one philosophy course; there might be a Latin course next year or the year after; and there's nothing yet offered in religion. We are, however, officially a Liberal Arts college, in spite of the fact that we offer majors in Business, Physical Education, and so on; in spite of the fact that no one seems particularly concerned that we learn the values at the core of civilization. *O tempora! O mores!* Let us either digest the cake or admire it—we cannot do both.

DEMOS: Well you can sit up here and wonder about reality if you want to, but Im going to eat; and when I've got enough dough, I'm going to live it up.

ARISTOS: Let me tell you of what Ulysses in Dante says to his comrades: "Brothers, Consider of what seed ye are sprung: ye were not formed to live like brutes, but to follow virtue and knowledge." Now virtue and knowledge are not good because they will make a man commercially successful: they are good in themselves, they are their own reward. To live in ignorance is to live like a pig; to live in knowledge and virtue (and one attends upon the other) is to live like a man, a creature a little lower than the angels. I'll admit this is a truth which is difficult to apprehend; but look at it from a not quite so exalted perspective. You say you want to live it up, that you want to enjoy life to its maximum? Who would disagree! All men desire the good, i.e., that which brings happiness. You will find, however, that if you put your stock in a *physical* good—sex, drink, food, bridge, gossip, all the other frivolities in modern life—you won't be getting any dividends. Money can bring you two cars, five TV's, mink coats, air conditioning and Paul McCobb furniture; but material possessions were never the secret of happiness. Of course, the two may go together, but art will give you far greater impulses of satisfaction than money. (ARISTOS slowly begins to rise in the air as he is carried away by his own eloquence.) If you know how to enjoy a novel, you

will be able to live in the palaces of princes or in the hovels of ragpickers; if you know how to look at a picture, you will be daily satisfied in the perception of beauty all around you; if you can appreciate the Goldberg variations, you will know something of eternity; if you can understand a play, you can learn as much of people as you will ever find out in a sociology course.

DEMOS; Say, Dad, whatcha doin'! Come down—I got some more questions. Listen—

ARISTOS; (Rising higher and higher, his voice growing more faint) Go listen to your abominable rock n' roll; go major in accounting; seek the mystery of life in your badminton game; find your happiness in your split-level Subtopian home, two-bit, clod-footed mortal. And I, beatific and oracular, will ascend unto the empyrean to know the Good, the True, and the Beautiful . . . Farewell . . . Thus spake Aristos . . . . . .

III

(The scene is flooded with a dazzling blue light. Fleecy masses of gauze float slowly across, each of which is followed by a tag beginning with a number. The last white mass carries the number 9.

ARISTOS breathes deeply, smiling happily. From the folds of his tunic he produces a pair of binoculars which he adjusts to focus on a scene below him. He turns away in obvious distaste from the spectacle. He then produces a small transistor radio, which he tunes to get Fats Domino singing "I'm gonna be a wheel." Amazement momentarily crosses his features until he tunes in another voice, this time a woman's voice, enunciating words slowly and with an echo effect.)

VOICE: Aristos, O Aristos, how long thinkst thou to float on Cloud 9? Canst thou escape eternally the horrors of the Rocking Rotation? Dost not thy conscience afflict thee?

ARISTOS: (with visible alarm and discomfort). Alas, a voice from the Ninth Empyrean! It deigns to address me, unworthy that I am—Who are you? But I know: you are Diotima. Diotima, Spirit of the Ideal, speak to me that I may learn.

VOICE: Even though, Aristos, thou hast done exceeding well to devote thyself to contemplation, yet thou hast erred to presume thy work is done. Mortal on whom there are yet vestiges of Alabama clay, let me say to thee that it is not for humans to leave the world until they have suffered fully the follies of their time. Thy transcendence is yet selfish . . . Return unto thy native land until thy time is full.

ARISTOS: Ah, Blessed Diotima, ask me to return to the caves of Niah, let me do penance in the ranks of the American Infantry, but ask me not to go back to the benighted groves of Academe. What purpose, Sublime One, could I serve in college?

VOICE: Thou mayest yet give sight to the blind and wings to the halt, hadst thou but the faith of the Ideal.

ARISTOS: Faith? I have faith. I have spoken in the halls of Comer but no one gave ear; I have preached from the summit of the Tower, but never a soul paid heed. Can you then tell me what wisdom I may convey?

VOICE: The wisdom of eternity is not to be heard in the flat prose of the preacher, and thou, Aristos, has sought to convert by preaching, which thou shouldst know to be a sin against aesthetics.

ARISTOS: Transcendent Martinea, pardon my gross obtuseness, but how else is true knowledge to be divulged? The men are engaged in a game called football, and the women, alas, have not—

VOICE: (Claps of thunder and lightning) Hold thy tongue, fool, and speak not against the divinest creature on the orb below.

ARISTOS: (shaking) Most humbly do I beg your pardon.

VOICE: As I was saying, mortals will not heed truth which is presented plainly; and therefore, Aristos, wisdom must be concealed in a guise. It will be thy duty to wander over brick walks expounding the worth of those creations of the most divinely gifted of humans. I refer, Aristos, to those sublime riddles which are called art.

ARISTOS: Long have I known, O Lady of Light, of the divinity of art. In fact, my last words on earth before my transcendence were devoted to the praise of art, but alas, in our colleges the worth of art is not generally acknowledged in budgets or in tea houses, and what can one or a few accomplish when the mass will be indifferent?

VOICE: Was not the Lord with Israel when they smote the Philistines? Thinkest thou that the Ideal will abandon thee when thou carriest the golden banner into the very accounting rooms, radio studios, and kitchens of the college? Again, Aristos, thou showest pitiable lack of faith.

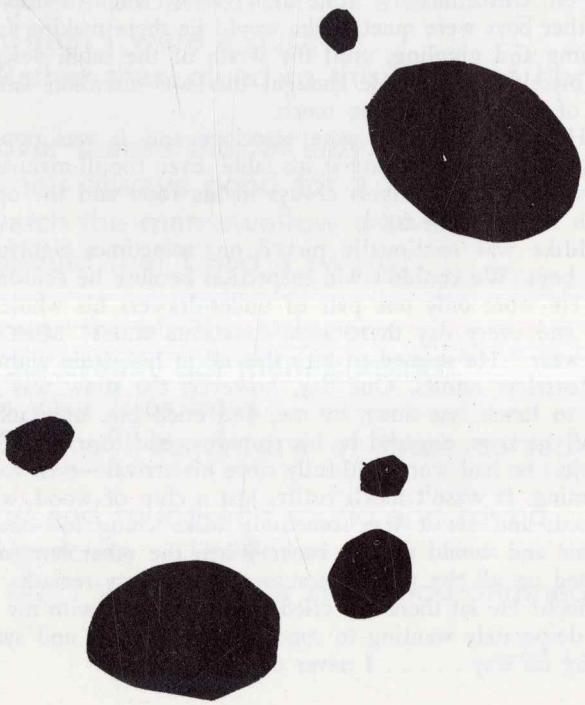
ARISTOS: But what may I say, O Seer, that a college will listen?

VOICE: Since, Aristos, thy wind is excessive, the less thou sayest the better. But thou mightest at least *show*. Hold thy peace now and listen . . . (Strains are heard of a Beethoven quartet. To the left faintly discernible through a scrim is one lean musician conducting a group of string instruments. Slowly the music and the quartet fade out.) Now open thy eyes and look . . .(To the right is a rotund gentleman with a black moustache in front of a group of students with palettes. They are genuflecting before the Venus di Milo, the tableau slowly fades.) Present wherever possible the immortal words of the Bard, and speak the scene, I pray you, as Kochman would have you speak it, trippingly on the tongue. In those brief years when a student would attend a college, they must realize that the brevity of life does not allow the mediocre or the second-rate. And I command thee to say this unto all students and unto all faculty and unto all those who hold awesome sway over the college.

ARISTOS: My mission then is to return to spread the gospel of Art?

VOICE: Yes, Aristos, for Art is the riddle of life, and in art, in the play and the poem, on the stake, and in the concert hall, can one strip away the veil separating the human creature from reality. With this sense of brevity, thou must speak: The gifts of art are riches not to be vulgarly measured on calculating machines, or in the laboratories of scientists, or on the ledger books of treasurers. They are, I say unto you, of the first importance, and if ye would have truly a liberal arts college, you must first seek answers to the questions which have perplexed mankind since first I spoke to Socrates. The answers most truly are to be found in works of art; and therefore I command you to return and tirelessly tell all concerned with a college that they must first acknowledge the value of literature, music, philosophy, painting and sculpture, for man cannot live by skills alone.

ARISTOS: Divine Diotima, thou hast convinced me. I shall return!
VOICE: Because then thou are faithful in the service of the Ideal, I will arrange some very special effects to accompany thee. Trumpets! (A flourish of golden trumpets sounds in reply.) Voices! (A heavenly Hollywood choir begins singing *Ah.*) Lights! (The celestial blue transforms to a rosy pink.) Good fortune and the blessings of the treasurer attend thee, Aristos. Thy travail will be long, but if thou servest well, thy reward will be the Ninth Empyean. Farewell!
(The Hollywood Choir sings more loudly, their voices rising to a magnificent and rich crescendo . . . Aristos floats away on Cloud 9, after which another cloud appears bearing the inscription THE END.)



MIKE 2

A character sketch by Chuck McManis

This summer I worked as a camp counselor. My one sad memory, of this otherwise wonderful experience, is that of some of my boys who were simply unable to live with other people. Many were sad because they *refused* to live sociably. One in particular, however, was heartbreaking because he was *incapable* of living with others. This is the story of Mike 2.

Mike was a scrawny, awkward boy with a senseless, jerking speech. His hardest thinking and most serious comments just never seemed to say anything. His speech tended to irritate everyone around him. His fellow campers, uninhibited ten-year-olds, made it quite clear to him that he was inferior and didn't make any sense.

A word about his name . . At the first of camp, I found I had two Mikes in my cabin so I named them Mike 1 and 2. Unfortunately, (a blunder I still regret), scrawny little Mike was 2. By the end of the week there was Mike, *the* Mike, and Mike 2, the afterthought.

His physical abilities were hopeless. He was pigeon-toed very badly in one foot. All his movements were jerky and uncoordinated. One of the most pitiful experiences took place in morning chapel. Each morning a boy was chosen to light the candles. Three of my boys had done this and bragged about their abilities as acolytes. Then it was Mike's turn. I could tell how much he wanted to prove himself. He jerked and stumbled, making a horrible mess of it. As a supreme mistake, he forgot to bow in reverence to the altar as he left. Half way back to his seat he remembered, turned and made a half bow. Still not satisfied, he turned again (stumbling and jerking) and curtsied—minuet style. Of course there was a murmur of giggles and comments from my other boys.

Mike brought many of his troubles upon himself. In the evening after lights out, the boys enjoyed telling what they called "dirty jokes and nasty things." This was one place everyone was included so I let it go on. Unfortunately, Mike didn't know when to stop. Long after the other boys were quiet, Mike would lie there making funny noises, laughing and giggling, until the wrath of the cabin descended upon him, myself included. He thought this was attention and made the most of it, which was too much.

His table manners were atrocious and it was popular among conuselors to avoid getting at his table. Even the ill-mannered campers commented on his fingers always in his food and the open-chewing mouth stuffed with food.

Mike was continually picked on, sometimes rightfully, by the other boys. We couldn't win inspection because he couldn't make his bed. He wore only one pair of under-drawers his whole two weeks there and every day there were comments about "Mike 2's stinkin' underwear." He seemed to take this all in his stride with unthinking and senseless retorts. One day, however, the straw was broken. He came to lunch, sat down by me, and cried big, ugly sobs. It seems one of the boys, angered by his stupidity, had torn off his name tag, an object he had worn faithfully since his arrival—even to bed and in swimming. It wasn't much really, just a chip of wood, with a string attached; and yet it was something Mike clung to—one thing that was his and would not hit back. When the other boy tore it off, it summed up all the picking comments and nasty remarks. It was just too much! He sat there and cried, and I sat there with my arm around him, desperately wanting to communicate my love and sympathy, but finding no way . . . . . I never did.

Prometheus On A Merry-Go-Round

Around and round and round and round
Up-down Up-down
Suffering, seething, aching, hurting.
Won't this damned circling stop?

Over there is the gallery
Where people shoot for a doll.
Would that I were a duck
Rather than glued to this damned horse.

And over there's the fat lady.
She's always good for a laugh.
Or, watch the man swallow a sword.
Would that I had a sword.

And over there's the stripper.
She's really got them burning.
Watch your fires boys
Or you'll be on one of these cursed horses.

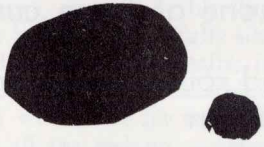
Around and round and round and round
Up-down Up-down
Why don't you eat your own God-damned liver.

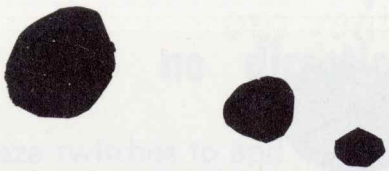
—Ed Cooper

they are

laughing. They are
A bunch of rat people. Singing—
high-pitched voices.
Tuneless. Toneless. Tin-pan torture.
Grinning monster mouths—
jack-o-lanterns on Hallowe'en,
cheshire cats in trees.
A ball on a string
held by a timeless hand—
Swinging. to and fro. Swinging
never stopping—swinging
to and fro—swinging,
In time with the music of ages,
the rhythm of repetition.
The rat people come
out of the skies,
Out of the cities. trooping across the land.
and the war chariot with a sound
like a peal of thunder
Rumbles along, across the desolate plain.

—*Jennette Carden*





A UNIVERSAL SYMPHONY

From the One Being of Nature
Like the eternal tumbling wave
Wells a glorious paean,
A grandiose magnificat.

The spheres emit in concord
Like a celestial choir
The euphonious descant,
The aria of the universe.

The mighty, roaring suns
Like bombastic bassoons
The booming basses are;
The silvery moons, the sopranos,
Like faint, tinkling bells
Tintinnabulate;
The swirling planets all
Like vibrating violas
Are the caroling tenors;
Many a speeding comet
Like a melic cello
Lilts the ariose alto.

This mellifluous cantata throbs
Like the peal of a reverberating bell
Among the far-flung orbs
In a universal symphony.

—Bruce McClanahan

2 poems

Rain on the streets and he goes barefoot by
I wonder why
He cries
And at no direction
This aimless show of emotion
Alone
His mother with a motion
Shifted the smaller one to her other arm
Stopped and called for him who cries
Come on heah Johnny
Took him by the arm and led him across the street
Leaving one boy arm free
To wipe away the crying tears

Plants take over when people depart
Weeds grow higher in the vacant lots
Of vacant houses.
They grow quickly, but their stems are weak
Hardly strong enough to bear their greenery.
It seems as if they know
They must grow
Quickly
To have their place alone
For a while
Forfeiting in the hasty process
Sturdiness and strength—
The power to remain
When the people come again.

—Jane Ingram

no direction

A breeze twitches to and fro in spastic furor,
entering uninvited into that wooded universe
which comprises a forest.

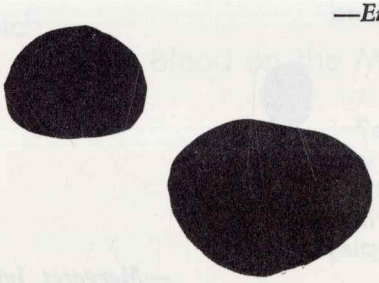
Blustering its way through impatiently,
it roughly fondles a leaf
—even many twigs and mosses—
and brutally tears it away from the
Mother Limb—its Life and Sustenance.

Indifferently this whisper of a wind—
(for indeed it is but a whisper of
a more powerful Monarch of this great
Infinity of space and time)—
Moves on in convulsive, undirected
jerks.

Flirting with time which mockingly urges it onward,
Its small but spirituous soul darts
across the sands, leaving in its wake,
A multitude of minute gullies and ditches which
Point toward anything and everything . . . . .
everywhere and no where . . . . .

Forgotten by this bullying, inconstant zephyr,
The solitary leaf faintly
Drops
to the ground.

—Eugenia Lew Morris



poem

"All the world is a stage" . . .
a stage whose fixtures are
corroded
with the vomity pollution of
millions
of years
footlights fading out
flickering out
dying out
with the brilliance of
countless fiery suns
grease paint—the
rotting
blood
of
some
never-born
human
mingled
with
soured—cankered
mud—
mingled together
in some forgotten ditch
In some forgotten slush hole
Once called a battlefield
Once honored as a battlefield
a glorious, heroic battlefield
Now the Elysian Fields
for bacteria's decaying meals
IS THIS RAGNAROK?
The
world
is
a
stage . . .
and
we're
the
players . . .
Stage?
where
art
thou
players?

—Margaret Jeffres

poem

Shadows
shaded
against the silhouetted
umbra of an obfuscated
moon
shadows———
———that
Venetian blind
———flipping
tripping
lifting
overshadowing the shadows
adumbrating the shadows
of the moon
Dimming the dogging duskiness
Duskiness seeking
to obscure this lunation
Drowning the shadows
shadowing the shadows
So that I can see
the overshadowing
specter
Specter of the essence
Specter—
———apparition
Blotch
of Blood on the Moon

—Margaret Jeffres

MARTYR

The connoisseur of doom he dallies
With recollected deaths; five white bones
In an ivory box, or remembered redolence
Of singeing hair among the incense.
He'll hazard all his charnel house of hate,
Those victims of his ruthless righteousness,
His whip-lash scorn of meekness
For that stern excellence of scalded blood
That makes a martyr.

His smile, a stigma long since frozen
To a gaunt skull invites the world
To feast upon him by and by, to drink
The gall of his forgiveness.

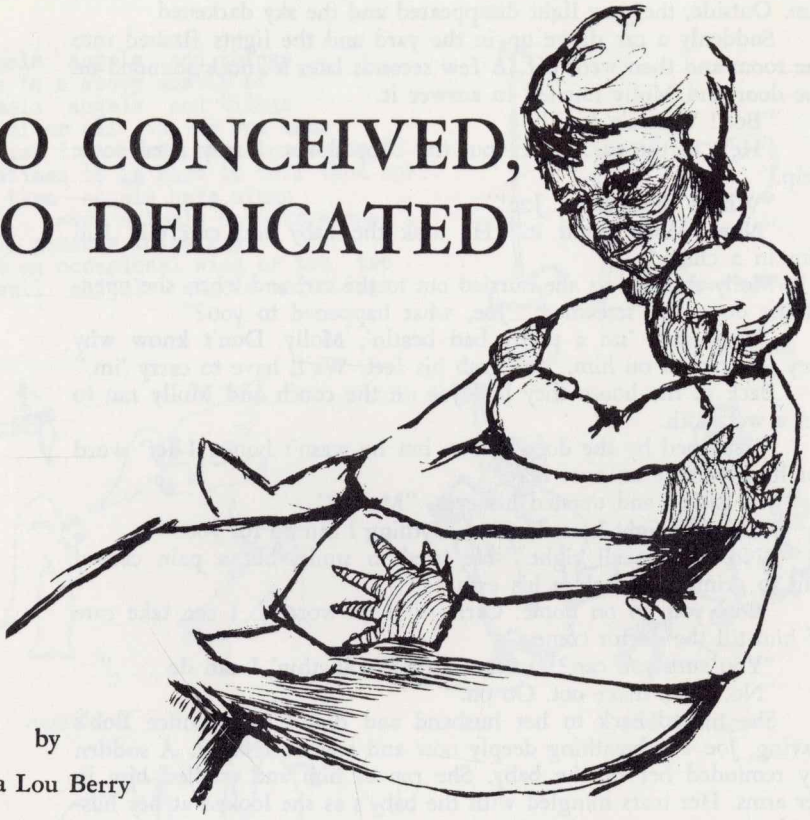
His smile's a live serpent that wakes
To warmth and writhes in pleasure, scenting pain,
And guards new wounds attained in Edens
Of self-denial.

Obedient to the faggot he triumphs:
The smoke of his transcendent conquest swells
His last relinquished breath still reeking
With the imprecation of his benediction,

And the World, cognizant of the curse
Strangles on devotion, drowns in sorrow,
Mingles smoking ash with tears
Knowing him for a saint.

—Angeline Waites

SO CONCEIVED, SO DEDICATED



by

Sara Lou Berry

Molly turned from the stove and looked out the kitchen window for the third time in five minutes. The sun had gone down and only a bleak gray light illuminated the area surrounding the small house.

A sound came from another part of the house; and Molly, turning her anxious eyes from the window, hurried to the bedroom. She picked up her six-month-old baby and carried him to the living room.

"Don't cry, little one. I might as well feed you. I was trying to wait till your daddy came home because he likes to do it. He's mighty late. I hope nothing . . ." Her voice trailed off as she remembered their conversation at breakfast that morning—

"Me and Bob are gonna vote today."

"Bob and I."

"Bob and I, then. Well, we're goin'."

"Joe, I wish you wouldn't. You know what they said."

"You're just going to get into trouble, both of you. I don't like it at all."

"Don't worry, Molly." He gulped his coffee and rose from the table. "Gotta hurry. See you at supper."

He should have been home long ago, she thought to herself uneasily. She sat in the big chair holding the baby and murmuring to him. Outside, the gray light disappeared and the sky darkened.

Suddenly a car drove up in the yard and the lights flashed into the room and then went off. A few seconds later a knock sounded on the door and Molly hurried to answer it.

"Bob! Where's Joe?"

"He's in the car. Better put the baby down. I may need some help."

"What's the matter? Joe!"

"Now, Molly, hold it." He took the baby and carefully laid him in a chair.

Molly shivered as she hurried out to the car, and when she opened the door, she screamed, "Joe, what happened to you?"

"They gave 'im a pretty bad beatin', Molly. Don't know why they jus' picked on him. You grab his feet. We'll have to carry 'im."

Back in the house they laid Joe on the couch and Molly ran to get a wet cloth.

"I stopped by the doc's house, but he wasn't home. I lef' word for him to come on over here."

Joe stirred and opened his eyes. "Molly?"

"Yes, I'm right here. Is there anything I can do for you?"

"No, I'll be all right." He tried to smile, but a pain caused him to grimace and close his eyes.

"Bob, you go on home. Carrie will be worried. I can take care of him till the doctor comes."

"You sure you can? I mean if there's anythin' I can do . . ."

"No, I can make out. Go on."

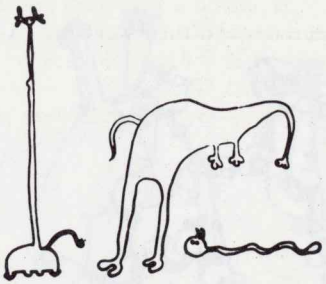
She turned back to her husband and didn't even notice Bob's leaving. Joe was breathing deeply now and seemed relaxed. A sudden cry reminded her of the baby. She ran to him and cradled him in her arms. Her tears mingled with the baby's as she looked at her husband.

"You haven't got a chance, little one. Not a chance. None of us has."

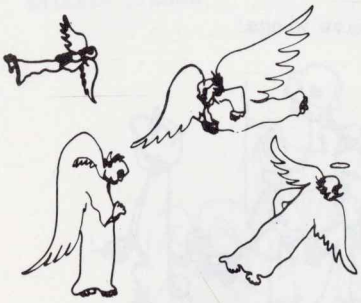
The sky was completely dark now, not a moon, not even a star, to relieve its cold, black expanse.

ANIMALS ANGELS and things

animals angels and things
this is a story mostly of
animals angels and things
and after all who do you know
who isn t animal angel or thing ?
sometimes it is hard to tell them apart
but then angels have wings
well some animals do have wings
and i guess a thing may
have an occasional wing or two too
oh well animals angels and things

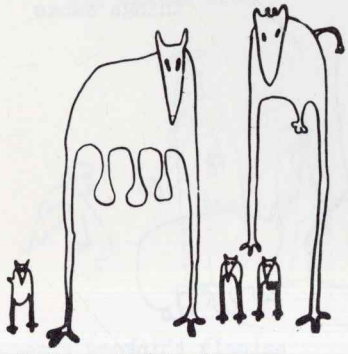


animals



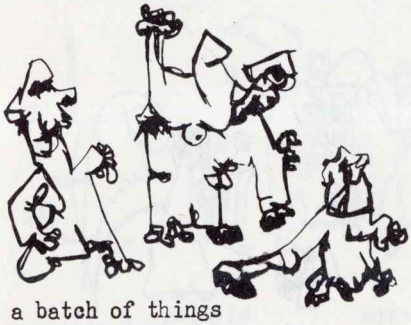
angels

and things

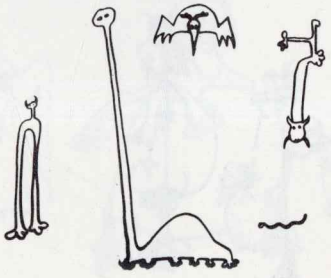


a family of animals

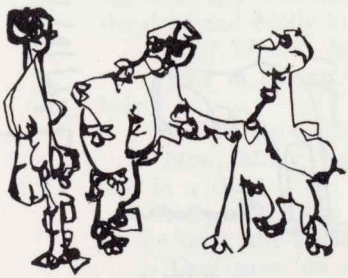
a host of angels



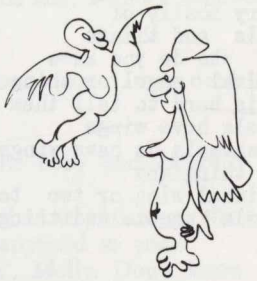
a batch of things



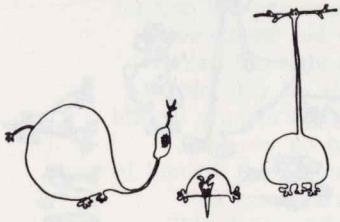
animals walk



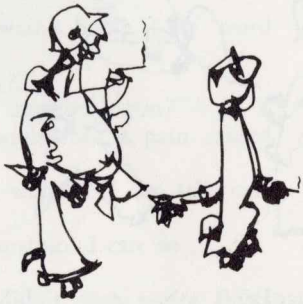
things talk



and angels have wings

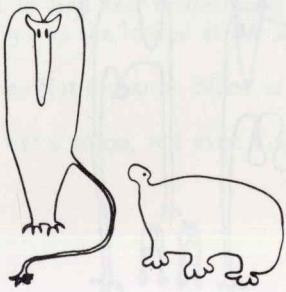


animals joke

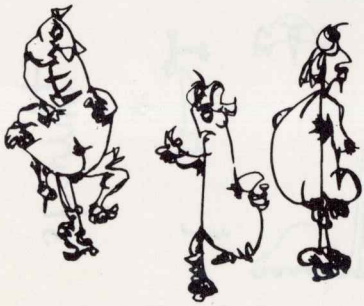


things smoke

and angels have rings

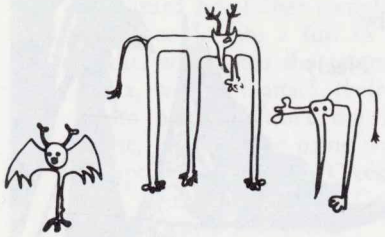


animals think

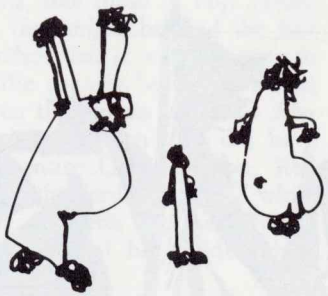


things drink

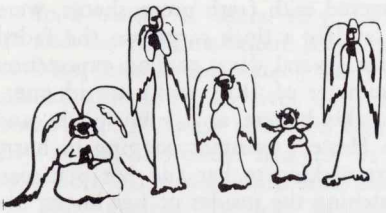
and angels pluck strings



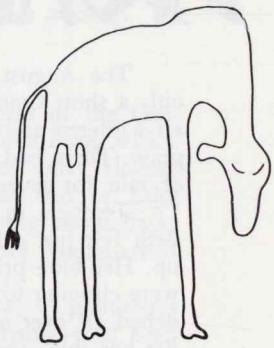
animals prance



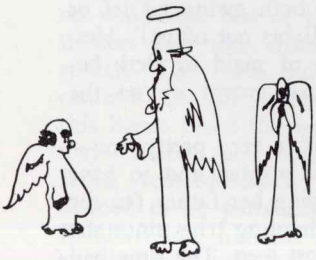
things dance



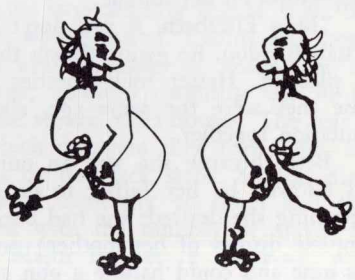
and angels sing



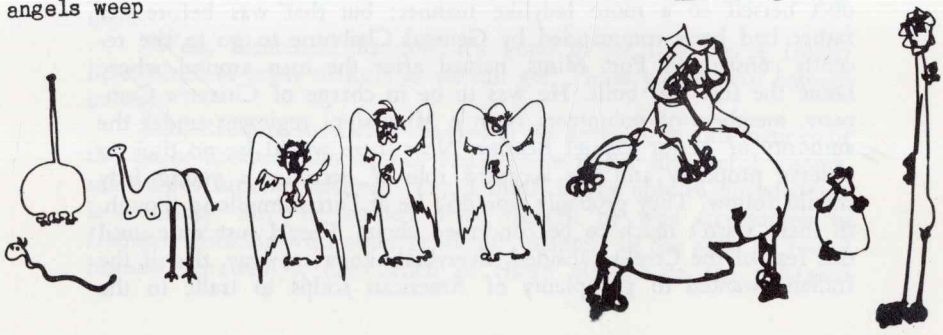
animals sleep



angels weep



and things are things

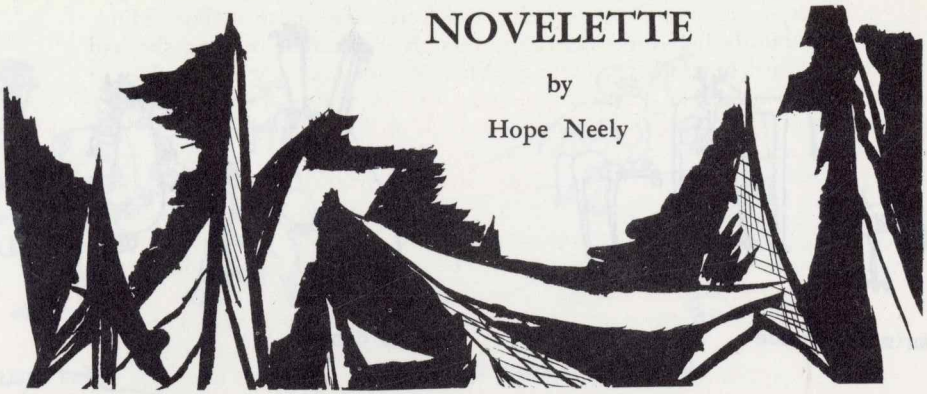


animals angels and things

EXCERPT FROM A HISTORICAL NOVELETTE

by

Hope Neely



The August day was hot and sultry; the oaks and pines, which only a short time ago had been covered with fresh green shoots, were all withered and brown and dust lay like a thick carpet on the faded grass. There had been no breeze for several days, and no expectation of rain for several months—the summer of 1813 was a torrid one.

Tempers in the Randon household were at a high pitch, and Beth felt just a little peeved with Hester's constant nagging to hurry up. Her blue print voile dress was sticking to her and her petticoats were clinging to her legs and scratching the insides of her knees. She itched all over and beads of sweat formed on her upper lip and under her chin. She licked her lips and frowned at the salty taste of the perspiration on her tongue.

"Miss Elizabeth, if you don't hurry we is both gwine git lef or Mistah Randon, he gwine thrash the livin' daylights out of us!" Hester pleaded. Hester took liberties in her role of maid to Beth because they were the same age, sixteen, and had grown up on the plantation together.

Beth, because she was an only child—and a very pretty one—was allowed by her father to do anything she wanted and to have everything she desired; she had been accompanying her father (to the complete dismay of her mother) on overnight hunting trips since she was nine and could handle a gun as well as most men. The time had come, her mother had informed her only a week ago, for Beth to conduct herself in a more ladylike manner; but that was before her father had been commanded by General Claiborne to go to the recently constructed Fort Mims, named after the man around whose home the fort was built. He was to be in charge of Citizen's Company, members of volunteers from a Mississippi regiment under the authority of Major Daniel Beasley. Now there would be no time to observe propriety and the accepted role of decorum a young lady should follow. They probably wouldn't be at Fort Mims long though, so there wasn't much to be concerned about. They'd just wait until this fear of the Creeks subsided. Everybody knew, anyway, that if the Indians wanted to get plenty of American scalps to trade to the

Spaniards in Pensacola for five dollars apiece, the best place to go was Georgia where there were more settlers who were less protected from attacks. This area around the junction of the Alabama and the Tombigbee Rivers was bristling with good, sturdy stockades and garrisons; moreover, the people in these forts, like those in Fort Mims, were mostly half breeds, wealthy though they might be, and she had overheard her father complain to her mother that it was pointless to herd people into a fort in this part of the country because the Red Sticks, which was the common name given the Creeks in South Alabama, wouldn't attack their own people even though they did have white blood. Wasn't the leader of the entire Creek Nation, Red Eagle, whose other name was William Weatherford, nearly all white except for one-eighth Creek Blood? And old Peter McQueen might lead as many tribes of Creeks as he wished, but he couldn't deny that he was a half-breed.

"Elizabeth Randon! Will you *please* stop dawdling? The supplies are in the wagon and we are ready to go," her mother scolded as she appeared in the doorway, thus interrupting Beth's musing.

* * *

In a matter of hours, they reached the intersection of the Cut-Off and the Alabama where they were met by the Mims Ferry which had been established sixteen years before. The tired ferry floated automatically down its river until it reached the tail end of Lake Tensaw, which always reminded Beth of a dead rat lying on its back. They moved down the lake to the northeast end and disembarked there. Fort Mims was only four hundred yards away.

They entered the fort through the West gate, a ponderous structure—its twin was at the opposite side of the garrison—and Beth noticed a partially completed blockhouse to the right, the only visible building of defense. It was built on land slightly higher than that on which the rest of the buildings were situated. Cabins and board shelters had been erected on every available spot of ground by the settlers. The main building, a large, spacious dwelling was in the center of the fort; attached to it were several shed-houses. The rear of this house faced the west, from which direction they had come, and they tethered their horses at a post by the back steps. Several dirty-faced, tousled-headed children stared curiously at them and they seemed to be particularly fascinated with the number of slaves the Randons had brought with them. Major Beasley, a heavy-set, well-muscled man who possessed the vocabulary of a mule skinner swaggered forward to greet the newcomers and welcome them to the settlement.

"Well, Lieutenant Randon, it's good to see that you're finally here. Need as many officers as we can get. Think you're man enough to stay?"

John Randon, somewhat abashed at the appearance and manner of the major about whom he had heard some rather distasteful rumors, saluted his superior officer. "Yes, I think I'll be able to do whatever is necessary, Sir," he replied. Even though he was accustomed to frequent drinking with other gentlemen planters in the area, he found himself repulsed by the stench of cheap alcohol on the red-faced

major's breath, mingled with the staggering fumes of sweat rising from the man's body. Randon guessed that it had been at least two weeks since the other man had bathed. The smell of urine and excrement inside the fort was rank, and Randon later found out that Beasley was unlike Sam Dale at Fort Madison a couple of miles away, for Dale was very strict about the cleanliness of the people in his fort. Major Beasley cared very little whether the settlers went outside the fort or just stepped outside their doors; consequently, the great majority of the occupants relieved themselves according to convenience.

Major Beasley conducted Beth, her mother, and Lieutenant Randon to a small room in Sam Mims' house where they would stay. Supper was served on the rambling porch of the house and Beth devoured the field peas, butterbeans, and corn bread on her plate. From bits of conversation at the table, she gathered that more detachments of soldiers would be sent to the fort in the next few days, preceding the arrival of General Claiborne on the 7th of August. That was encouraging news, she thought.

After supper, Beth accepted her mother's suggestion that she go to bed early and get a good night's sleep for the long days ahead. As she lay there on the mattress, one arm beneath her head, the lights from numerous campfires danced and jiggled along the wall, the throaty crooning chants of the Negroes down in the potato field and the deep bellow of the bullfrogs resounded through the woods, and somewhere an owl questioned his neighbor.

On the afternoon of the 7th, General Claiborne, with two aides and a scout arrived. The grizzled old man dismounted while one of his aides held the reins and nodded to Beasley as he gazed about the fort. A frown crossed his face as he encountered the unfinished blockhouse and the inadequate picketing surrounding the buildings.

"Major Beasley!" he demanded, and Beasley visibly straightened and darted his eyes toward the general. "This place is in pitiful condition. Look at the men standing around making jokes. The Negroes are taking naps during the day, I see, and there is no one supervising the play of the children; don't you understand that a war with the whole Creek Nation is imminent and that one of those infants might wander outside of the garrison?"

Major Beasley shifted from one foot to the other in silent discomfort.

"Strengthen the picketing, build two more blockhouses, respect the enemy, send out scouts frequently, and allow the suffering people provisions, whether whites or friendly Indians! That will be all on the subject!"

After this tongue-lashing from the general in front of the silent jeers of the men who sat languidly in the shade, Major Beasley was sullen for several days and his sharp commands for a while thereafter were hastily obeyed—especially by the Negroes—in spite of the contempt of the men for him. Another source of irritation to the blustering man was the obvious love and devotion bestowed on Captain Dixon Bailey by everyone in the settlement. Bailey had been unanimously elected to lead the seventy militiamen formed from the ranks of the settlers; he was a half-breed, well Sam Mims was a half-breed and there were a hundred half-breed women and twice as many

children, some of them having relatives among the warriors of Red Eagle's army. Hell! He was half Creek, himself. "Everybody's a damn half-breed," he spouted. Any fool would know that those Indians out there wouldn't attack their own blood. Their leader was almost white; who could think that he would be powerful enough to lead the Red Sticks against their own people? "Of all the goddam', son of a bitchin' places to be!" he sputtered. "Here I am in the middle of almighty hell playing nursemaid to a bunch of women and stinking niggers . . . full of half-breeds," he muttered to his bottle, "and *they* think the Creek Nation, as thick in their tribes as old clabber when it's stuck to the bottom of a churn, is going to fall out of the skies on their people." He shrugged his shoulders and, throwing his head back, raised the container to his lips and drank long, deep draughts. Then he slammed his bottle on the desk, sending papers scurrying to the floor. "And at *this* place of *all* places! Only 553 scalps in this whole rotten camp and a million Indians out there. They'll go to Georgia because if there's one thing an Indian is, it's smart!"

From the energy derived from this irascible state of mind, the major did think to enlarge the fort by extending the picketing sixty feet on the east side. This area he designated to the tents of the officers. At the suggestion of John Randon, whose cool, detached manner impressed the major and brought forth some sort of respect from him, Beasley had extra picketing added to Patrick's loom-house to form a bastion, although the term for the edifice was incorrectly used, for the structure remained little more than a loom-house with attached picketing. To the consternation of Randon and other officers, the major, confident that no attack would be launched, dispatched small groups of soldiers to surrounding forts where citizens had gathered and asked for military assistance. He greatly weakened the strength of the stronghold by this careless act. The east gate was wide open, forming a gaping hole in the fence of timbers. The major did not deem it necessary to keep the heavy gate closed as the inmates frequently went out into the surrounding woods and canebrake for additional water because the one well was insufficient in providing for the increased number of people; many times they hunted small game to replenish their supply of food. The cattle were kept on the flatlands outside the fort, tended by Negroes belonging to the plantation owners, and were brought in each night. It was too much trouble to lift the gate and drag it open all day long. Sand had washed and blown against it now, anyway, and it was impossible to close without the strength of at least six strong men behind it.

The soldiers, most of them young men, were weary of the confinement they were being subjected to, and a general atmosphere of revelry arose from nervous energy engendered by the hot, sticky climate, the boredom resulting from inactivity, and the endless waiting for something that no one could put his finger on. Riotous gambling prevailed: dice were loaded and cards were marked and the ensuing arguments and fights provided entertainment for onlookers. The liquor-soaked Major Beasley in a week-old shirt that was stained and caked with dirt, the sweat pouring down his temples, rolled up his sleeves and began an interminable poker game with some of his

officers. Drunken soldiers guffawed and slapped their thighs at the off-color jokes they exchanged. Courting was the order of the day and young girls danced through the nights with their amorous swains. Children ran hither and yonder, unsupervised, exploring every nook and cranny in the stockade. They scampered over and crawled under the buildings, examining guns and making their own with which to kill their make-believe Indians. Their mothers were much too busy swapping old and new gossip with each other to be concerned with their offspring. What harm could possible come to them anyway? Scouts were on duty every day and searched the countryside for the Creeks, but not even a trace of the enemy could be found. It was becoming apparent that the Creeks were moving on Georgia as everyone knew from the beginning they would. Ol' Dan Beasley might be disgusting in his behavior at times, but he turned out to be a shrewd man who knew his business, after all. And Dixon Bailey expressed the same sentiments as the major. You couldn't go wrong by what Captain Bailey said. Pretty soon they would receive word that the Creeks were smoking the peace-pipe again and they could all go home and pick up where they left off.

Beth approached her father who was sitting underneath an enormous live-oak in the north-west corner of the palisade. Motionless, he was staring into space meditating, a pleasure he had not allowed himself since before he had received General Claiborne's orders and the whole messy affair that had brought them to this place to moulder in inactivity had begun. Beth knew he would most likely be remembering the days of leisure on the plantation and wondering whether he would ever be able to take his family back to their home. Would their home *be* there when they did return? She questioned herself feeling a little sad at the idea that she might be forced to gaze upon the ruins of the only home she had ever known. She stood there looking down at the blond head of the person she loved more than anybody or anything, even herself. She knew, as she had always known, that if it ever became necessary, she would gladly and willingly give her life to save that of her father.

"Daddy," she almost whispered, "let's go somewhere by ourselves—just the two of us—and talk."

He stared at her intently for a full minute, then jumped up. "Let's go get the horses! But we can stay only a little while, Miss."

As they carefully wound their way on the gradually descending terrain toward the river, Randon justified his slightly reckless behavior to himself. After all, Beth was his only child, and he had never denied anything to her before; she trusted him completely—he couldn't disappoint her. She would have understood, of course, if he had refused her request, and would have accepted his opinion without objection and dropped the subject forever. She had just that sort of good nature. But Beth was too much like himself, he remembered, and she had that same flair for taking risks and tempting fate. He knew, too well, how her mind worked. What's more, he rationalized and dismissed the subject, the fort was back at its former comfortable state; the Creeks were nowhere within fifteen miles in every direction, no reports of any danger from them had come from the other strongholds, and the imagined peril had

vanished. They would attack some other fort.

"What do you have in that precocious mind, my little lady?" he asked her as they dismounted at the river's edge and sought a dry, sheltered spot in which to sit.

"Daddy," she frowned, tossing a stick in the water and watching the widening circle it made. "No one, it seems to me, has ever bothered to go into the matter a little deeper and answer the really important question—that of the cause of this rising agitation in the Creek Nation. Everybody has given me the impression that they think they've always been at war with the Creeks; they appear to have forgotten that not too long ago we were at peace with the Indians!"

"Well," he sighed as he gazed at the clear sky and stared beyond its blue depths at pictures he could only see in his mind—misty, evasive images that always managed to escape him when he reached for them. They were the constituents of the answer *he* desired. "I can't give you the real reason for the cause of the war with the Creeks," he began, "because I don't understand white people, even though I am one, myself. We move into this country we christen *America* looking for something better for ourselves and our children, and this is understandable. But we discover a proud and noble race, pure before it becomes contaminated by us—a race in complete harmony with nature; it is amazed by our way of thinking and cannot convince itself that the blindness with which we are handicapped really exists, so it becomes a victim of the glib and profuse promises we make to satiate our greedy hearts with more and greater conquests (yet our hearts are never satisfied) because truth is the only absolute it has known; it has not yet learned to refer to the people it has welcomed and calls its 'white brothers' as 'the men who speak with forked tongues.' In its innocence, it places its faith in us and takes us into its own heart, patiently stands by as we struggle to use the limited knowledge we have painfully gleaned from the endless store of wisdom so readily offered us—but so thanklessly received—and imagines the same pride that is its motivation to be equally present in our ignorant hearts, and so it is careful to pretend that it does not see the mistakes we make for fear of offending or humiliating us and destroying the great pride it believes us to possess. And *there* is the beginning of the adulteration—the contamination of the race, because it *pretends not to notice!*"

John Randon traced the outline of the fort with the end of a stick in the dirt and mulled over what he had just said. "We have *no* pride at all, Beth!" It was partly a statement and partly a question. "We sit in council with the Indians, smoke their peacepipes, and tell them what we can do for them. We made treaties, which we break—we dig their gold, fill them full of whiskey, wantonly destroy for sport the animals they protect and depend on, take their lands and their women, burn and pillage their villages, order them to leave the country their forefathers hunted in, tell them that there has never been an Aba Inki but only God, which they cannot worship properly except enclosed in a house of wood and bricks that shuts away their stars and birds. Then, we accuse them of every sin of which we are guilty and hang them by ropes suspended from

crosses we have taught them to pay homage to, or worse, we put them in jails to rot alone. Deep down in their hearts they are sick and afraid.

"Do you wonder that there should be war with the Creeks now? A month ago, a white man on his way to Mississippi was killed by a marauding band of Indian outlaws. Weatherford had the outlaws captured, and their leaders killed; nevertheless, many of the Creeks disapproved of the action of their leader in killing members of their own tribe. A party of them, drunk on liquor given them by white men, killed an American named Meredeth and a small fight occurred between some white settlers and handful of Creeks; as a result some of the Indians were killed. The Creek Nation split.

"There were those who, like Red Eagle, wanted to live in peace with us," he said, standing up, "But the majority, backed by British rum and gold wanted to make war on the settlers. They wanted to curb the flow of the people who were smothering them before it was too late. Weatherford told Sam Dale that he would lead the Creeks who wanted peace against the warring ones rather than fight the Americans."

As he helped Beth to her feet, Randon continued, "Dale reminded Weatherford that the Indians who were following him were smaller in number and not as well-armed and organized. Weatherford explained to him that the Spaniards in Pensacola would supply them guns and ammunition."

Beth climbed on her mare in silent comtemplation and waited for her father to continue.

"A company of Mississippi militia," he proceeded, "hearing that a party of Red Sticks had gone to Pensacola for arms, were under the impression that the Indians were planning to use them against the whites, and invaded the Creek Nation with the intent to capture the Indians and confiscate the guns. They told Dale, who tried to stop them and attempted to correct the misunderstanding that they were going by the right of self-protection and nothing could deter them. Dale tried to reach the Creeks to warn them in advance, hoping that he would prevent a battle, but he arrived too late. Near a creek—the name of it is *Burnt Corn*—the 180 men in the militia came upon a small band of Creeks who had made camp and were sitting around a fire eating. Their horses had been unloaded and hobbled and they had carefully stacked the precious guns they had gotten in Pensacola and were to use against their own brethren to prevent a war between the Americans and the Creek Nation. Shouting and laughing, the militia poured into the clearing, descended upon the startled Indians, and opened fire. A day later, Red Eagle sent a messenger to Dale at Fort Madison with a declaration of war. His messenger told the old friend of the Creek leader that America had struck first. Weatherford would support his nation."

Lieutenant Randon, returning to help protect a pitiful little fort which had been hastily thrown together to provide a small amount of protection for a number of people, slumped in his saddle depressed by the weight of his own words, and waited for Beth to digest everything he had said.

Beth rode ramrod straight in the saddle, her flashing eyes staring straight ahead. She was indignant at the outrage committed on

the Creeks and now felt little sympathy for the tough, brawling men at the stockade. They were bullies and cowards.

"Fort Mims probably won't be bothered by the Creeks, Beth," Randon said. "The Indians will attack one of the forts, though, to avenge the slaughter of their tribesmen at Burnt Corn." His heart went out to the Indians, he admitted frankly to himself, but, like Weatherford, he would fight to the death for his own people. He watched the girl beside him as she rode in stony silence and he felt the hostility she had begun to have toward her own race. "There are little children in that fort, Beth," he said.

The rusty gate hinges shrieked their protest as they resisted Randon's straining efforts, but the big door yielded and Beth entered the stockade and waited for her father to close the gate and remount. The setting sun felt warm on her back and she let her eyes go out of focus as she thought about what her father had just told her. Her unseeing eyes fell on a throng of shouting settlers bunched around an object in their midst. She gaped, not believing what she saw. "Daddy, they're beating a slave!" she said tremulously—she had never seen a slave flogged. "Stop them!" she shouted as she spurred her horse forward.

Randon was right behind her and stared at the Negro whose bleeding flesh was being torn into with thick leather whips— attached to their ends were heavy iron balls. "Daddy," she cried, "it's Jim!"

"My God!" Randon's face was contorted with rage and he felt like saying, You goddam filthy bastards! What right have you to *touch* one of my slaves? Randon had never laid a hand on a single one of his slaves and the sight before him knotted his stomach. "Take your hands off my man!" he demanded as he jumped off his horse and pushed his way through the jeering crowd.

Beth was too sick to stay and watch the men argue while the unprotesting slave remained tied to the post, barely alive. She reined her horse away and slowly made her way to Mims' house. Once dismounted, she dragged herself to her room and, as she undressed to go to bed, her mother told her briefly what had happened.

Jim and another slave had tended the cattle on a hill a few miles away. That afternoon they rushed in and told Major Beasley that they had counted twenty-four warriors in war paint. Captain Middleton and his men returned to the place with the Negroes and, unable to find a trace of the Indians, returned at sunset, when Jim was severely flogged for bringing the settlement a false alarm. The other slave belonged to David Fletcher, who wouldn't allow him to be touched. Fletcher with his large family had been ordered to leave the next morning.

Beth slept late that morning. She was exhausted after the mental turmoil she had undergone the day before. The sun was high in the heavens and she was reluctant to move even though the heat was stifling. She forced herself to rise, however, and, aching in every joint, she slipped into the coolest dress she could find and went outdoors. For the first time, she wasn't quite sure what to do with herself. The well seemed the most likely place to go so she plodded to its edge and raised a bucket of the cool water to refresh herself. She saw that Fletcher's slave was being tied to the same post at

which Jim had received his terrible punishment the day before and she reasoned that Fletcher must have given his consent to the flogging in order to remain in the fort. She was too apathetic to care about it, really, and turned away. Some laughing children raced past her, playing tag, but she hardly saw them. Soldiers, leaning on their elbows on the ground, eyed her wistfully. Sounds of music drifted from the main house and she guessed they were dancing in there. The drum rolled its low cadence, summoning the settlers to dinner.

Beth stood frozen to the spot. She tried to scream but no sound would come, only a hollow rasping. Help! She mouthed the word, but nobody heard and she watched a thousand Indians leap in one simultaneous bound from a ravine thirty yards from the east gate. God, God, I can't move, she moaned. And then she screamed.

"Indians!" Major Beasley roared, and he rushed to the gate, his sword clanking against his knees as he ran. The red-faced drunkard, Beasley, ran to the enemy and vainly tried to shut the sand-swamped gate. His shoulder to the gate, he was shouting with all his might when a copper arm slammed a tomahawk down the middle of his skull and he fell beneath the trample of a hundred moccasined feet.

The men streamed out of the big building, some with forks and knives in their hands, and bore down on Beth as she tried to push her way through them. A high-pitched feminine wail arose amid the shouts of the soldiers who ran, bent over low, to their posts, cocking their rifles and firing into the ranks. Five Creek prophets with blackened faces, covered with feathers and carrying bags of magic, were dancing and chanting in front of the Indians who had poured into the eastern part of the picketing and the volley of shot from the soldiers immediately downed the prophets.

"Hey, look!" a young boy shouted. "The Injuns are retreating." The Indians, somewhat perplexed, were again moving out of the fort to go into council. Their prophets had been killed and prophets couldn't be killed by American bullets. The bullets would split and fall harmless to the ground. Something was wrong. Maybe Aba Inki was angry with them for attacking the settlers.

Exultant shouts filled the fort and the soldiers congratulated themselves on dispersing the enemy so quickly. Hardly more than a handful of soldiers had been killed and only a few children and one woman were dead. This was a great victory for them—they had routed an enemy a thousand strong with only two hundred soldiers.

"Man your posts," Major Beasley groaned. He had crawled behind the gate; his life was quickly draining away.

"Major Beasley!" Beth cried, as she realized the commander was still alive. She ran the few feet to his side and began dragging him toward the big house.

"Go away, girl!" he said. "Get in that house. The Indians will be coming back. I can't last much longer. Tell your father to take his men and man the blockhouse, and tell Bailey to take the north pickets, Jack, the south, and Middleton, the east." He gasped a last breath and his head dropped upon his chest.

Beth ran to find her father, bumping into women and children who were milling about as she went. "Get back in the house," she yelled. "The Indians are coming back."

Shrieks of women and children and the loud bellow of the men resounded throughout the fort as the war whoops rose anew. The Indians were climbing the stockade, firing into the wandering throngs of helpless people. Women and children fell like flies. Indians swarmed over them like ants at a kill.

Beth watched in speechless horror as an Indian picked a child up by a leg and smashed his brains out as he swung him against a wall. Its mother fainted and another Indian grabbed her hair, pulling her head back, and slit her skin from ear to ear, ripping her scalp off. Beth, pushing back the desire to vomit, saw her father and gave him the major's orders.

"Go see to your mother!" Randon, flushed and dripping with perspiration, brushed her away with a wave of his hand, and began rounding up his men and ordering them to proceed to the blockhouse.

Beth lurched forward, almost falling on her face in her long-legged flight to reach the safety of the house. The spine-chilling screech of horrified women reminded Beth of the fighting cats in the dead of night. As she lunged to escape the downthrust of a tomahawk, she saw, to her horror, an Indian slash the pregnant stomach of a writhing woman, plunge his hand into the cavity, and triumphantly swing out the tiny embryo as the expectant mother shuddered and died.

Susan Randon crouched, trembling, in the corner of the room; there was a glazed look in her eyes, and she babbled incoherently at the appearance of her daughter. One look at her mother convinced Beth that nothing she could do would be of any help, and she immediately resolved to wipe out as many Indians as she possibly could. The women had begun to organize somewhat, and several of them were loading guns for the men who had remained at the house to protect them. She grabbed a rifle and the bone-handled pistol her father had left with them in case of just such an emergency and crept to a window. There's an Indian in there, she realized, as she looked at the closed door between her room and the next and heard the plea for mercy from the lips of some unfortunate child. She sneaked to the door, jerked it open, shoved her pistol into the back of the redskin, and fired. The Indian fell without a sound, his scalping knife clattering on the hard floor.

"The house is on fire!" someone yelled, and the wail rose in greater volume. The draft caused by open windows only fanned the flames. Beth deafened by the crackling roar of the fire and the cries of the trapped, was choked by thick smoke; she stumbled, coughing onto the porch, barely able to stand the sickening stench of burning flesh. She stood there and retched uncontrollably.

"To the bastion! To the bastion!" was now the cry. Old men, boys, and the few remaining soldiers groped their way through the smoke and fell over dead, dying, and mangled bodies, many pitching to the ground under tomahawks and the unceasing volley of fire. A few of them managed to reach the sanctity of the loom-house where a number of soldiers discharged their rifles in a vain defense. The big house caved in from the destruction rendered by the ravenous flames; most of the women and children were in it. Beth crawled under the rubble of burnt and charred boards and watched for a

chance to reach her father or to escape. The revenge-bent Indians had already taken the bastion and were savagely scalping their victims. Four Spaniards, deserters from Pensacola, were kneeling at the well, invoking the clemency of their God. Two big Indians snapped their necks and began their barbaric knifing custom. Beth observed that there was no one defending the south end—Jack's men had been completely wiped out—nor was there anyone on the east. The blockhouse was still intact and she wondered if her father were still alive. Bailey was still making a valiant stand at the northern end of the picketing.

"Hester," she gasped. Her slave was running to the northern end of the stockade. Beth watched in amazement as the agile Negress climbed over the pickets and tore through the canebreak amid the barrage of bullets directed at her. She saw the slave bend double and grab her side as one of the bullets found its mark, but Hester kept running and reached the safety of the swamp.

"Good old Hester." Beth breathed a sigh of relief. The loyal Hester would make it to Mt. Vernon and tell Claiborne of the horrible massacre.

Seeing her chance, she scrambled from beneath her hiding place and flew across the open field to the blockhouse, which was now on fire and emptying of its few remaining occupants.

"Daddy!" She collapsed into her father's arms with tears of joy.

"Run, Beth! I'll stay here and find your mother." Randon, ecstatic that his daughter was unharmed, pushed her away.

"No! Go with me," she pleaded. "Mother's dead; she burned in the house."

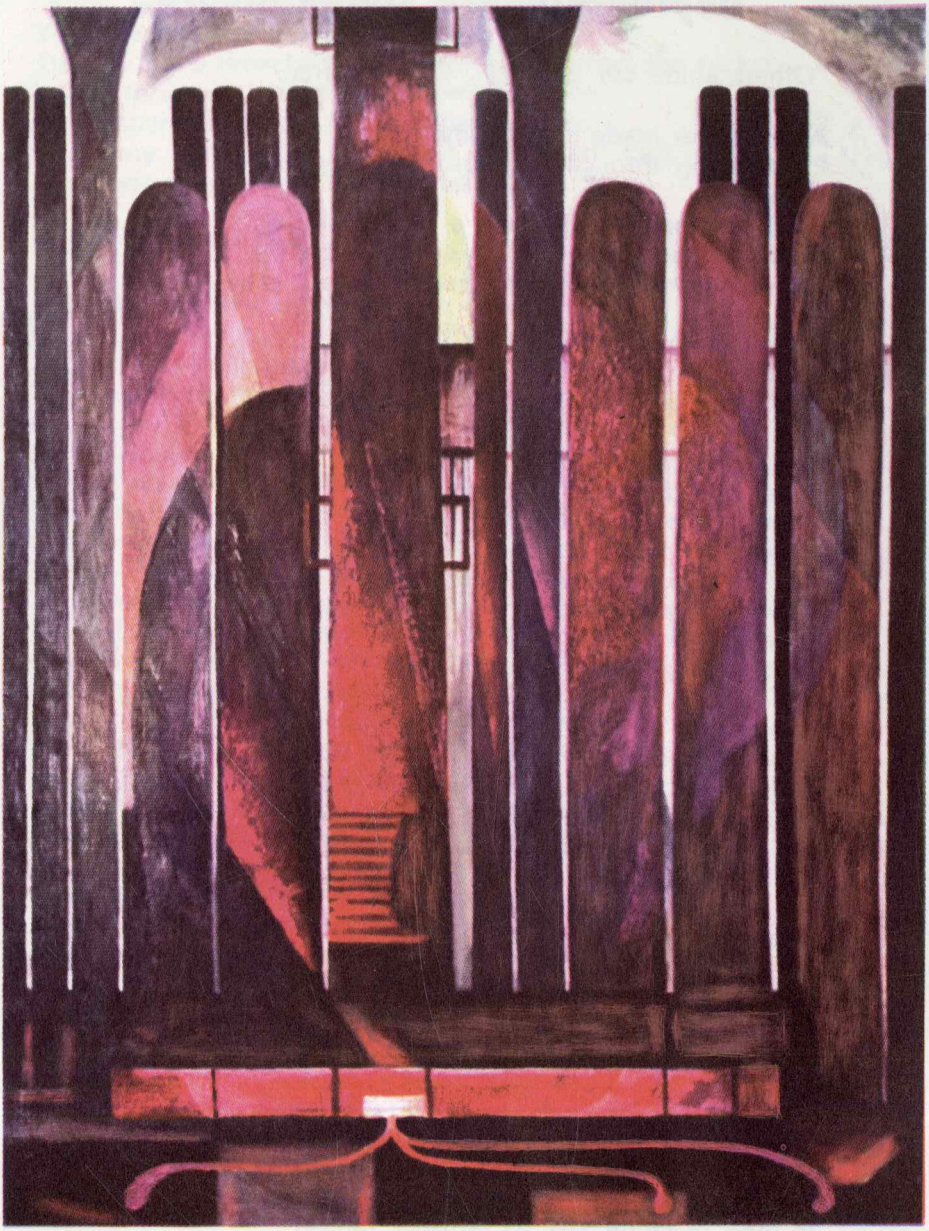
A look of sorrow crossed his face and his body was possessed by an overwhelming fatigue. Regaining his senses, he grabbed her hand. "Let's go."

They reached the haven of the woods and Lieutenant Randon stopped.

"Now, Beth," he said. "We're going to have to split up. We won't make as much noise that way and our chances of being noticed will be lessened. Go around the lake and meet me again at the boathouse on the river."

Beth hurried through the woods, anxious to rejoin her father. We really are lucky, she thought. Hester had escaped and she had seen three other people make their way past the Indians. Of course, those people might be overtaken and killed or they would become captives in some Indian village, which occasionally happened when Indians had lost children or squaws. All the other people who had been in the fort were dead. She and her father would find a boat, cross the river and make it to another fort. Soon they would go back home and live the way they always had, hunting and fishing, and living a life of ease. There would be more money after awhile and they'd have more slaves than they ever had before.

A hand slapped over her mouth, her head was jerked back and she looked into the black, impassive eyes of a Red Stick.



TOWERS FOR STEEL — Virginia Barnes

Impromptu On Shakespeare

"Others abide our question. Thou art free."

And Hamlet made commodity
Runs raving through a thousand living rooms:
Between
Two paint commercials and a station break;
Shoe salesmen have "To be or not to be"
Served up with liverwurst and chocolate cake.

Others abide—
Between
Synthetic neon suns that never set
And asphalt deserts stretched into a sky
Defined by a skyscraper silhouette
(Less lyricism, more stability
Than a greenwood tree)
Newspaper hucksters cry
The latest summit talks, fruit vendors spit
Upon their apples, ad men hustle by;
Others abide—
Does anybody mind a word of it?

Between
"That's not a size thirteen!"
And
"You got it in some color besides green?
No, no—the style's fine, just one objection:
Green don't do a thing for my complexion."

And
He caught her by the throat and feeling the pulpy
mass of damp flesh went mad kicking her again and again
till her blood-curdling screams (cont. on page 31)
God, for an Arden!

Mid still lifes of books bared in public libraries
Where a caitiff sun slinks in among the shelves,
An academic cast of muted light
Shut in convent quietness, footsteps fall
In long receding arcs of muffled sound;
A musty, a cathedral sanctity,
Holy, almost, as madmen, chaste as eunuchs;
Row on row, mathematically ascending,
Brown books stand sentinel against the dark.
And dog-eared, stained with coffee (beer, perhaps),
Lear cries out against his thankless child:

"Blow, winds, and crack your cheeks! Rage! Blow!
You cataracts and hurricanes, spout
Till you have drenched our steeples, drowned the cocks!
You sulphurous and thought-executing fires,
Vaunt-couriers to oak-cleaving thunderbolts,
Singe my white—"Say, this stuff is not half bad,
It sounds a whole lot better read out loud!

QUIET PLEASE!

And all that little Latin and less Greek
Served well enough, it seems, that artisans
Have made their stock and trade deciphering
Bad prints and reprints.
Mr. W. H.
Is well-served too, and even better served
Are scholars with much Latin and more English,
Who, twice-baptized in fire and holy ink
Make much solemnity on "Where was Hamlet
Before Wittenburg?"
Time has had no way with him, except
That of a tyrant overthrown by might
Proved in a pen. Four centuries have kept
His day inviolate, his escutcheon bright;
And still a flesh-and-blood Ophelia, mad
Of a still-timely madness swells the stage
Into a cosmos; timely Caesars clad
In tweed bleed well in an ambitious age—
And yet in a tired world long since inurred
To blunt, unbeautiful Reality
Seldom redeemed by passion, or a word
That transforms commonplace to poetry
Strange, almost, that a Juliet may move
A breed of men who never die for love . . .

—Angeline Waites